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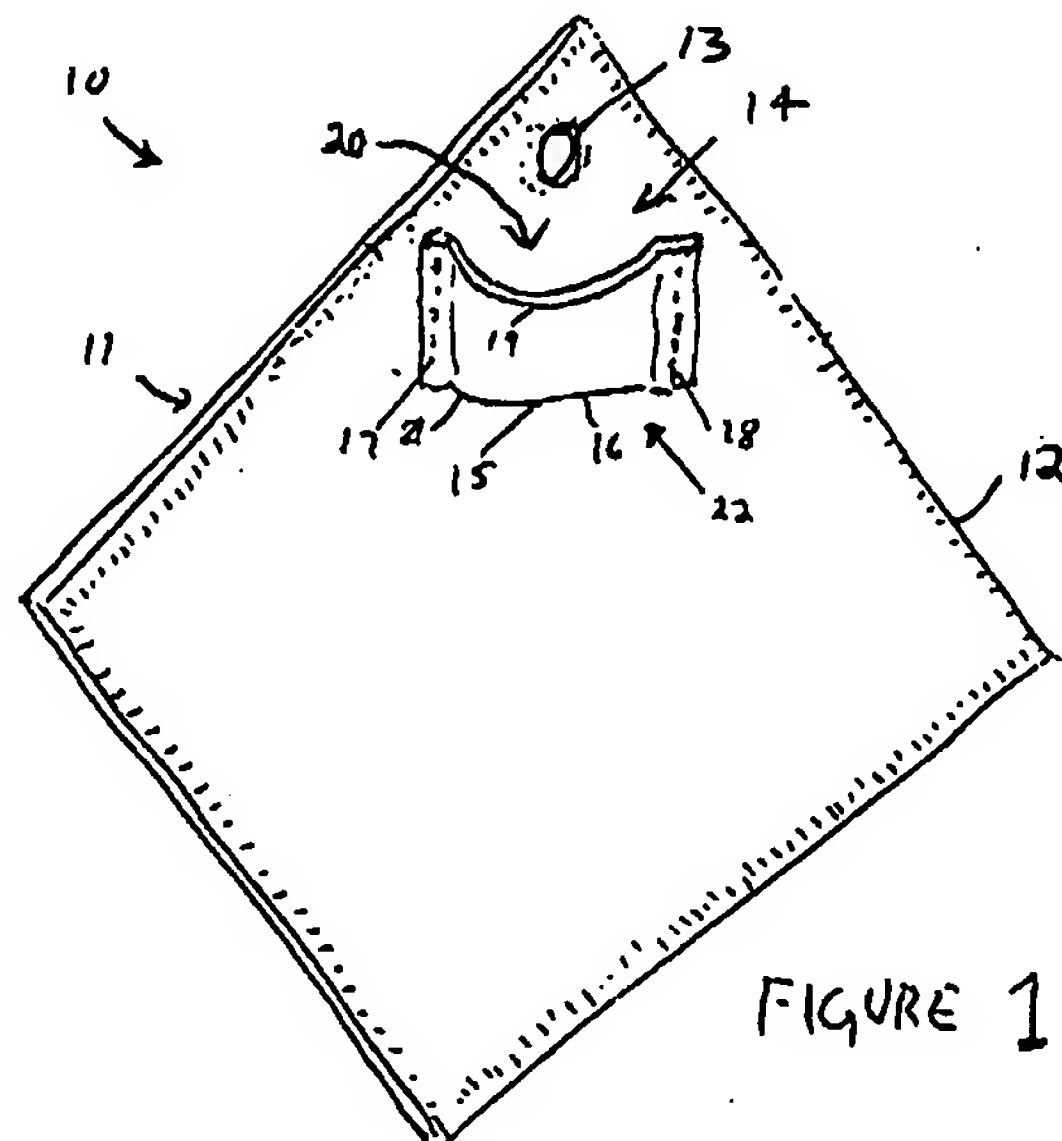
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(56) Documents Cited
GB 2278778 A GB 2254782 A
GB 0740206 A US 5443880 A
US 5147703 A

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(54) Abstract Title
Golf ball cleaning and drying aid

(57) A golf ball cleaning and drying aid comprises a piece of towel 12 provided with a cleaning station 14 in the form of a strip 16 of material large enough to cover a golf ball or an enclosure (30), Fig 2 (not shown), for the ball attached to the towel, eg by stitching. The ball is manipulated under the strip or in the enclosure and after cleaning may be deposited directly onto the towelling material for drying so that the golfer's hands need not touch the ball when wet. There may be rough material, eg netting (32), to provide a scrubbing action; and sponge material (41), Fig 3 (not shown) for retaining moisture in the enclosure which can be temporarily closeable. The aid is intended to allow a handkerchief size towel to be used and carried in a golfer's pocket.



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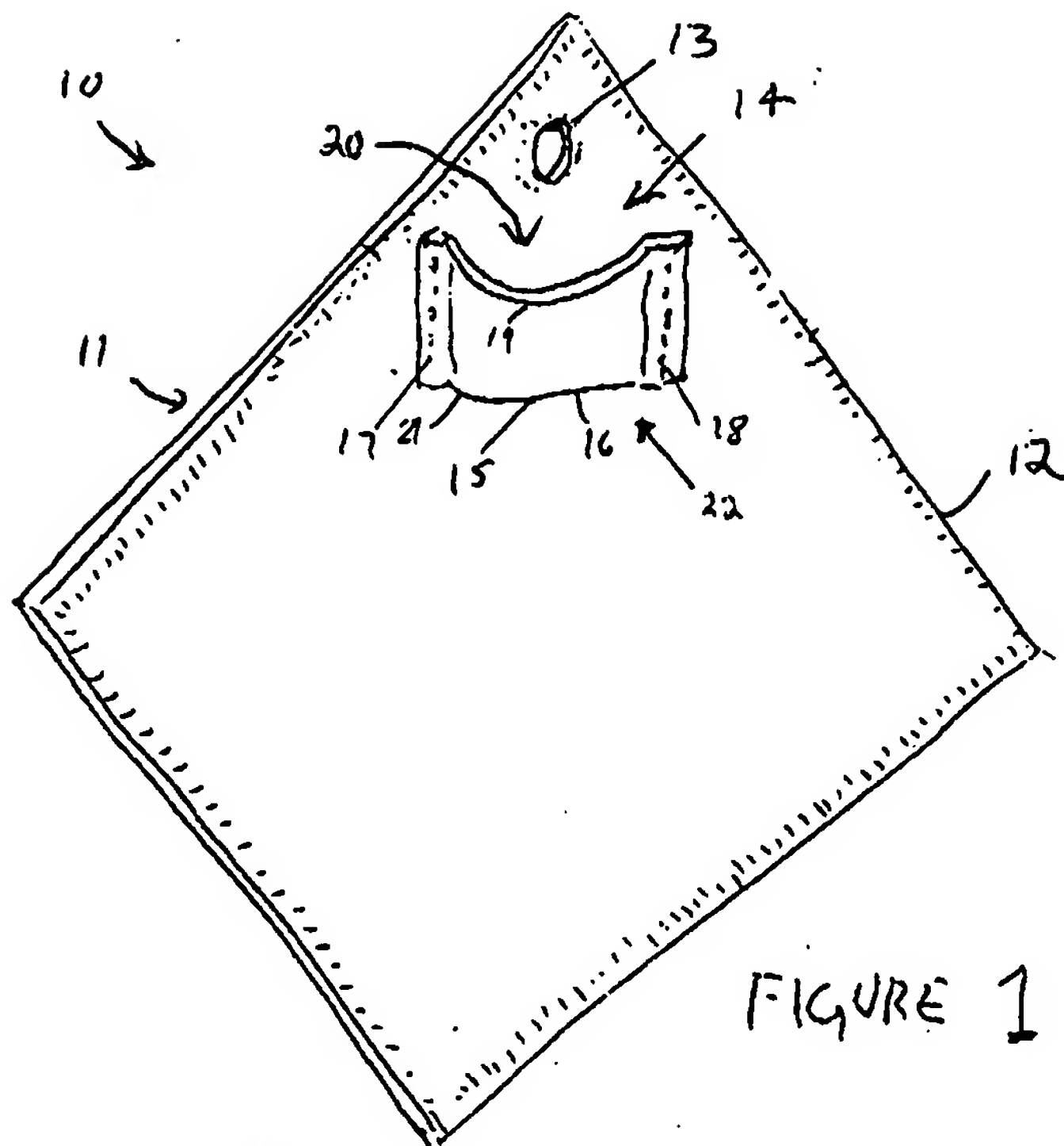


FIGURE 1

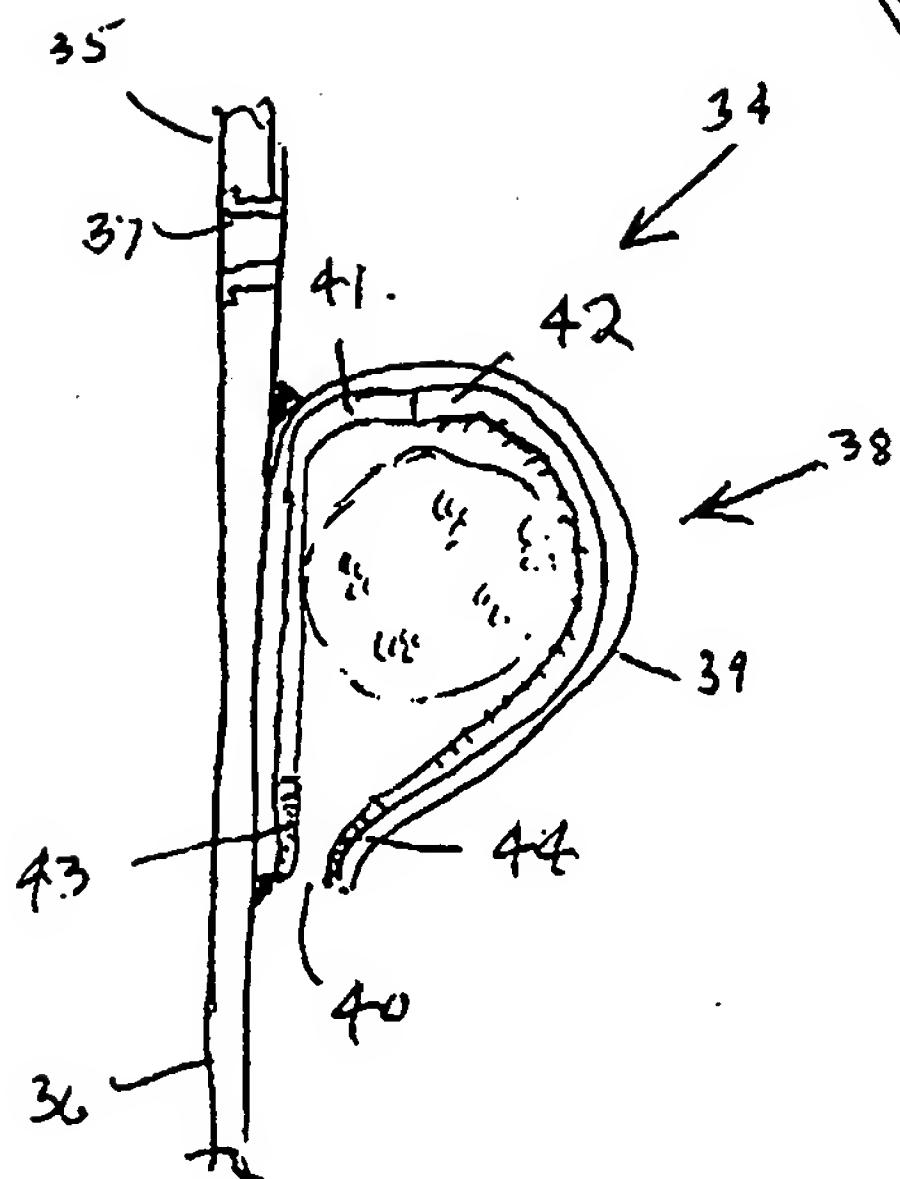


FIGURE 3

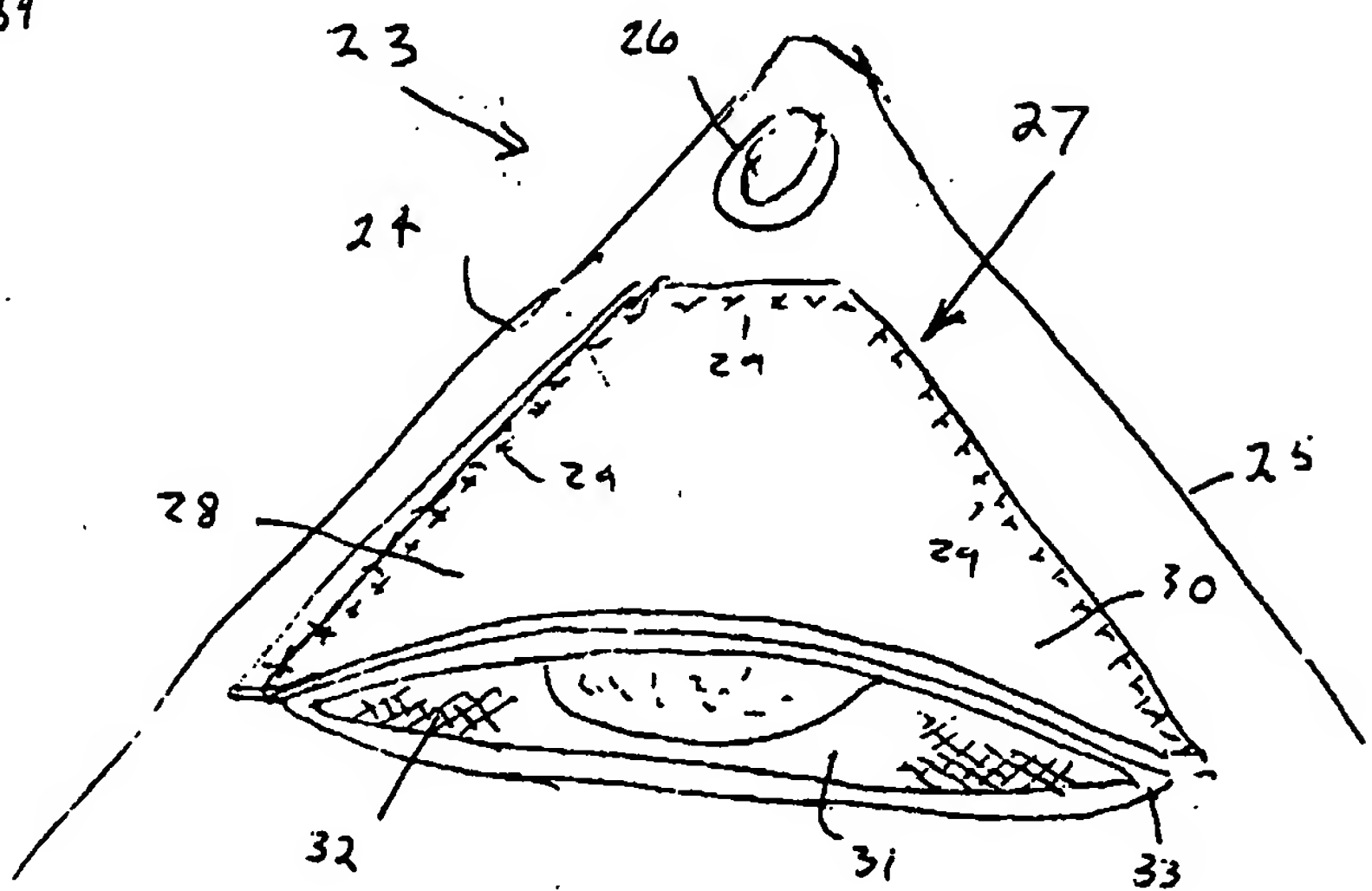


FIGURE 2

GOLF BALL CLEANING AND DRYING AID

This invention relates to a golf ball cleaning and drying aid.

Golf ball cleaning and drying aids are known in the art. US patent 3806983 (Cunningham et al) discloses a golf ball cleaning and drying aid comprising a pouch made of embossed thermoplastic material having two interconnecting compartments in the shape of an hourglass figure. The bottom compartment is lined with bristles to form a cleaning compartment whilst the top compartment functions as a drying compartment. Drying agents such as naphtha have to be introduced into the drying compartment almost on a daily basis before use. A main problem with this device is that it cannot be used to perform the ordinary functions of a golf towel such as drying the hands, grips and clubs hence this device has to be used in addition to the use of a golf towel. Another golf ball cleaning and drying aid is disclosed in UK patent 868539 (Wetherby). This comprises a tubular member made of relatively rough water absorbent fabric material. An upper portion contains a waterproof container in which a golf ball can be washed whilst the lower portion is slit to facilitate the drying of the golf ball. A problem with this device is that the golfer has to handle the wet golf ball when transferring the golf ball from the washing compartment to the drying compartment. Also the device has to be maintained in the upright position to prevent water dripping from the washing compartment.

An object of the present invention is to remedy the deficiencies of the above prior art devices.

According to the present invention there is provided a golf ball cleaning and drying aid comprising towelling material, a part of the towelling material including a cleaning station for a golf ball wherein an outlet from the cleaning station opens out onto the towelling material.

The invention will now be described by way of example only with reference to the undernoted drawings wherein:

Figure 1 shows a golf towel incorporating a cleaning station in accordance with the invention.

5 Figure 2 shows a fragmentary enlarged view of a golf towel incorporating a further embodiment of a cleaning station in accordance with the invention.

10 Figure 3 shows a part sectional view of a golf towel incorporating yet a further embodiment of a cleaning station in accordance with the invention.

A golf ball cleaning and drying aid in accordance with the broadest aspect of the invention is shown generally at 10 in figure 1. In figure 1 golf ball cleaning and drying aid 10 comprises a first piece of towelling material 11 in the form of a golf towel 12. Golf towel 12 has a stud 13 let into it for a clip (not shown) to facilitate attachment to a golf bag. Golf towel 12 has a cleaning station 14 formed thereon in the form of a receptacle 15 for a golf ball to be cleaned. Receptacle 15 is formed by attaching a second piece of towelling material, similar to the first piece of towelling material, in the form of a rectangular strip 16 to golf towel 12, for example, by stitching along lines 17 and 18. The top 19 of strip 16 in conjunction with the golf towel 12 forms an inlet 20 to receptacle 15 for a golf ball to be cleaned and the bottom 21 of strip 16 in conjunction with golf towel 12 forms an outlet 22 from receptacle 15 for a cleaned golf ball to be dried. In use the strip 16 of relatively rough and water absorbent towelling material is dampened to facilitate the cleaning of a dirty golf ball inserted into cleaning station 14 via inlet 20. The ball can be pushed through the cleaning station 14 from the inlet 20 to the outlet 22. The rectangular strip 16 has sufficient length and breadth so as to ensure an adequate

margin of towelling material on either side of the golf ball such that the golf ball may be manipulated backwards and forwards by the golfer's fingers through the medium of the towelling material to thereby impart a scrubbing action to clean the wetted golf ball. Once the golf ball has been cleaned it can be pushed or squeezed out through the opening of outlet 22 again through the medium of the towelling material and strip 16 directly onto the golf towel for drying, that is, the clean golf ball emerges from outlet 22 onto the golf towel without further handling of the golf towel by the golfer. Thus once the golf ball has been entered into inlet 20 the golfer's fingers need not touch the golf ball during the cleaning and drying process. Whilst the portion of the towelling material adjacent to the strip 16 may also become somewhat dampened during the cleaning process this is not likely to be detrimental to the drying process because of the relatively large drying area of the golf towel in comparison to the relatively smaller cleaning station. Strip 16 of towelling material may be partly elasticated to better retain a golf ball and lie substantially flat against the golf towel when the cleaning station is not in use.

A further embodiment of the invention is best explained with reference to figure 2. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid 23 is shown generally in figure 2. Golf ball cleaning and drying aid 23 comprises a first piece of towelling material 24 in the form of a golf towel 25. Golf towel 25 has a stud 26 let into it to facilitate attachment to a golf bag and may differ in size from the golf towel 12 shown in figure 1. Golf towel 25 has a cleaning station 27 formed thereon in the following manner. A second piece of towelling material in the form of a layer 28, similar to towelling material 24, is attached to golf towel 25, for example, by stitching, along the golf towel side edges 29 to form in conjunction with golf towel 25 a roughly triangular enclosure 30 for a golf ball to be cleaned fitting neatly into the corner of golf towel 25. Enclosure 30 has a single opening 31 which functions both as an inlet and an outlet opening for a golf ball. Enclosure 30 contains a lining

32 of rough netting material attached along a rim 33 only so that it can be pulled out of enclosure 30 to be dampened and also for cleaning when the golf towel is to be washed. When dampened the relatively rough netting material 32 facilitates a wetting and scrubbing action to clean a golf ball when manipulated backwards and forwards by the golfer's fingers through the medium of the material of the enclosure 30. After cleaning the golf ball can be squeezed or pushed out of enclosure 30 through the opening 31 directly onto golf towel 25 for drying. Once again the golfer's fingers need not handle the golf ball until the cleaning and drying process is complete. If desired the enclosure 30 may comprise waterproof material and may be closeable by some simple means such as Velcro strip or zip fastener. This will prevent the surrounding towelling material from becoming dampened and will maintain the dampness in the rough netting material 32 for a longer period of time.

A further embodiment of the invention is shown in figure 3. In figure 3 a golf ball cleaning and drying aid is shown generally at 34. Golf ball cleaning and drying aid 34 comprises towelling material 35 in the form of a golf towel 36. Golf towel 36 includes a stud 37 to facilitate attachment to a golf bag and may differ in size from the other golf towels described with respect to figures 1 and 2. A cleaning station 38 is formed on golf towel 36 in the following manner. A pouch or pocket 39 of flexible waterproof material, for example, Neoprene or other thermoplastic material is attached in any suitable manner, for example, by stitching or adhesive within a corner of golf towel 36 as shown for enclosure 30 in figure 2. to golf towel 36. Waterproof pouch 39 has a single opening 40 which functions both as an inlet for a golf ball to be cleaned and as an outlet for a cleaned golf ball to be dried. One half of the inside of pouch 39 is lined with a layer 41 of water absorbent material, for example, sponge material whilst the other half of the inside of pouch 39 is lined with a layer 42 of scrubbing material, for example, rough netting material or fine bristles. Since it is not intended that pouch 39 retains water or other cleaning fluid opening 30

may be rendered closeable by simple means such as Velcro strips 43, 44. This will ensure that once the water absorbent material has been dampened it will retain its dampness for a longer period of time. Once a golf ball inserted into pouch 39 has been cleaned it can be pushed or squeezed out of opening 40 and deposited directly onto golf towel 36 for drying. It should be noted that the embodiment of the invention shown in figure 1 may be provided with the oppositely facing layers of water absorbent and scrubbing materials as described for the embodiment shown in figure 3 and also may comprise waterproof material.

There is probably no such thing as a standard size golf towel. However, the difference in size between most golf towels and the larger full size towel used by professional caddies would be readily appreciated. Likewise it is believed there is a need for a towel somewhat smaller in size than the golf towel, say, of handkerchief size. This would allow the golfer to have a towel incorporating the cleaning station of the invention handily in the pocket whilst on the green preparing for putting or whilst walking to a distant tee for driving. This is in contrast to most golf towels which are usually attached to the golf bag or a full size towel usually carried separately by a professional caddie. A handkerchief size golf towel would be made of lighter material than the other larger versions and the clip stub omitted.

CLAIMS

1. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid comprising towelling material, a part of the towelling material including a cleaning station, the cleaning station having an outlet wherein the outlet opens out onto the towelling material.

5 2. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1, the towelling material comprising a first piece of towelling material and the cleaning station is in the form of a receptacle for a golf ball wherein a second piece of towelling material is attached to the first piece of towelling material to thereby form the receptacle for the golf ball.

10 3. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 2 wherein the second piece of towelling material is in the form of a strip of towelling material.

15 4. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 3 wherein the strip of towelling material has sufficient length and breadth so as to provide an adequate margin on either side of a golf ball placed in the receptacle to allow the golf ball to be manipulated within the receptacle to thereby clean the golf ball.

20 5. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1 wherein the cleaning station comprises an enclosure for a golf ball, the enclosure having a single opening functioning both as an inlet and an outlet, the outlet opening onto the towelling material.

25 6. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 5 wherein the enclosure comprises a waterproof pouch attached to the towelling material.

7. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1 wherein the cleaning station includes a layer of water absorbent material.

8. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1 wherein the cleaning station includes a layer of scrubbing material.

5 9. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 8 wherein the scrubbing material comprises rough netting material.

10. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1 comprising waterproof material.

10 11. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 5 wherein the enclosure comprises a waterproof pouch attached to the towelling material.

12. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 5 wherein the enclosure is closeable.

15 13. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 12 wherein the enclosure is closeable by means of Velcro strip.

14. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1 wherein the cleaning station includes elasticated material.

15. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1 comprising a golf towel of handkerchief size.

20 16. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid substantially as herein described with reference to any one of figures 1 or 2 or 3 of the accompanying drawings.

Amended claims have been filed as follows

6.8

CLAIMS

1. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid comprising towelling material , a part of the towelling material including a cleaning station, the cleaning station forming a receptacle for a golf ball and having an outlet wherein the outlet opens out onto the towelling material.

5 2. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1, the towelling material comprising a first piece of towelling material and the cleaning station is in the form of a receptacle for a golf ball wherein a second piece of towelling material is attached to the first piece of towelling material to thereby form the receptacle for the golf ball.

10 3. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 2 wherein the second piece of towelling material is in the form of a strip of towelling material.

4. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 3 wherein the strip of towelling material has sufficient length and breadth so as to provide an adequate margin on either side of a golf ball placed in the receptacle to allow the golf ball to be manipulated within the receptacle to thereby clean the golf ball.

15 5. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 1 wherein the cleaning station comprises an enclosure for a golf ball, the enclosure having a single opening functioning both as an inlet and an outlet, the outlet opening onto the towelling material.

20 6. A golf ball cleaning and drying aid according to claim 5 wherein the enclosure comprises a waterproof pouch attached to the towelling material.



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Claims searched: 1 at least

Examiner: Roland Whaite
Date of search: 27 March 2001

Patents Act 1977
Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK Cl (Ed.S): A4V (V9): A6D (D6)

Int Cl (Ed.7): ^{A47K}~~A47B~~ 10/02; A63B 47/04

Other: ONLINE: EPODOC JAPIO WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X	GB 2278778A L MacLEOD (see especially pockets, reference 12 and 13 on Figure 1, and the pocket 15 on Figure 2)	1 - 5
X	GB 2254782A A PUGH (see especially Figure 1)	1
X	GB 740206 A E EVANS (see especially pocket 11 and flap 16 in Figure 1)	1 - 5, 12
X	US 5443880 C J WIKE (see references to waterproof materials in columns 2 and 3)	1 - 6, 10 - 13
X	US 5147703 J PROVOST & K MARTIN (see Figures 1 and 5)	1 - 5

X Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step
Y Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.
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A Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art
P Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
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